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## THE SUBSTANTIVE *SI*-CLAUSE

BY H. C. NUTTING

The subject of the substantive *si*-clause can be approached most readily through a consideration of the conditional periods in which *si* appears with a correlative. When the apodosis of such periods precedes, the correlative is apt to have restrictive force; e. g.:

Cic. *De off.* iii. 3. 13: id habet hanc, ut opinor, sententiam; cum virtute congruere semper, cetera autem, quae secundum naturam essent, *ita* legere, *si* ea virtuti non repugnarent.

Cic. *P. Marcell.* 8. 25: sed *tum* id audirem, *si* tibi soli viveres aut si tibi etiam soli natus esses.

Cic. *Ad Att.* xii. 38. 2: tu, quoniam necesse nihil est, *sic* scribes aliquid, *si* vacabis.

Cic. *Orat.* 58. 197: quae (sc. quadrandae orationis industria) latebit eo magis, *si* et verborum et sententiarum ponderibus utemur.<sup>1</sup>

More interesting but less frequently noticed are the conditional periods of this sort in which the correlative of *si* is a phrase in the ablative case; e. g.:

Caecina apud Cic. *Ad fam.* vi. 7. 4: sed tamen ego filio dixeram, librum tibi . . . *ea condicione* daret, *si* reciperes te correcturum.

Cic. *P. Sest.* 10. 24: foedus fecerunt cum tribuno pl. palam, ut ab eo provincias acciperent quas ipsi vellent . . . *ea lege*, *si* ipsi prius tribuno pl. adflictam . . . rem publicam tradidissent.

Cic. *De invent.* ii. 32. 99: postea (sc. oportebit) demonstrare potuisse vitari; *hac ratione* provideri potuisse, *si* hoc aut illud fecisset.

Plaut. *Bacch.* 447, 448: *hocine* hic *pacto* potest  
inhibere imperium magister, *si* ipso primus vapulet?

That these ablative phrases are correlatives of *si* is established by three circumstances: (a) the sentences, as they stand, are normal conditional periods; i. e., their two clauses are related as

<sup>1</sup>This use of *eo* with a comparative as a correlative of *si* is not generally noted. Other cases are Cic. *De orat.* ii. 52. 209, *P. Rab. Post.* 17. 46, *Tusc. disp.* ii. 26. 64; so also hoc with a comparative, Cic. *In Caecil.* 2. 4. Cf. *eo* (without a comparative), Plaut. *Poen.* 1194.

protasis and apodosis; (b) the ablative phrases express manner, and, with their modifiers, have the force of demonstrative adverbs;<sup>1</sup> (c) the ablative phrases make explicit what otherwise would be implicit in *si*; consequently they are somewhat pleonastic—if omitted, the syntax of the clause to which they belong would not suffer, and the meaning of the sentence would still be clear enough.<sup>2</sup>

It is, however, cases of this sort that pave the way ultimately for the use of *si* in substantive clauses which serve merely as an expansion and explanation of a noun or pronoun. At first sight, some such examples may seem very like the sentences just discussed, but closer inspection will show that the word or phrase expanded by the *si*-clause lacks the qualifications essential to correlation with *si*; e. g.:

Cic. *P. Rab. Post.* 10. 28: nam . . . *haec una ratio* a rege proposita Postumo est servandae pecuniae, *si* curationem et quasi dispensationem regiam *suscepisset*.

Livy xxi. 10. 4: iuvenem flagrantem cupidine regni *viamque unam* ad id cernentem, *si* . . . . succinctus armis . . . . *vivat*, . . . . ad exercitus misistis.

In these sentences *haec una ratio* and *viam unam* are obviously not correlatives of *si*; for (a) they have not the force of demonstrative adverbs; (b) they do not express something that otherwise would be implicit in *si*—their omission would wreck the sentence, and (c) the clauses of which they form a part do not sustain the relation of apodosis to the following *si*-clause, but are independent statements. To these statements the *si*-clause is appended as a tag explaining and expanding *haec una ratio* and *viam unam*, i. e., it is used as a mere substantive clause.<sup>3</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> To cover examples in which *si* has not pure conditional force, (a) and (b) would sometimes need interpretation or expansion; e. g., in the case of *Caes. Bell. Afr.* 86: ante oppidum instructos (sc. elephantos) constituit, id *hoc consilio*, *si* posset Vergilius . . . . a pertinacia deduci. The choice of the correlative *hoc consilio* is an interesting evidence of the final force of the subjunctive *si*-clause after verbs of action and effort; cf. *University of Cal. Publications, Classical Philology* I, p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> As, e. g., Cic. *De off.* i. 11. 34.

<sup>3</sup> The mood in these substantive *si*-clauses seems to call for no special treatment. The great prevalence of the subjunctive is due to the large number of cases in which there is obliquity partial or total, and to the fact that a substantive *si*-clause dependent on a past tense is apt to carry the *futurum in praeterito* idea.

close parallel to the substantive *ut*-clause may be seen by comparing the passage last cited with the following:

Livy xxxvi. 27. 8: *haec una via* omnibus ad salutem visa est, *ut* in fidem se *permitterent* Romanorum.<sup>1</sup>

So also in the following sentences:

Cic. *Ad Q. fr.* iii. 1. 1: totum in *eo* est, . . . . tectorium *ut* concinnum *sit*.

Cic. *Ad Att.* ii. 22. 5: unum illud tibi persuadeas velim, omnia mihi fore explicata, si te videro; sed totum est in *eo*, *si* ante (sc. te *videro*) quam ille ineat magistratum.

The range of expressions that may be expanded by substantive *si*-clauses is quite considerable. Some very clear-cut examples occur when the phrase contains a numeral greater than one; e. g.:

Cic. *De invent.* ii. 43. 126: quo in loco iudici demonstrandum est, quod iuratus sit, quid sequi debeat; *duabus* de *causis* iudicem dubitare oportet—*si* aut *scriptum sit* obscure aut *neget* aliquid adversarius.

Cic. *De leg.* ii. 20. 49: nam illi quidem his verbis docebant; *tribus modis* sacris adstringi—aut *hereditate*, aut *si* maiorem partem pecuniae *capiat*, aut (si maior pars pecuniae legata est) *si* inde quippiam *ceperit*.<sup>2</sup>

Cic. *De off.* i. 20. 67: id autem ipsum cernitur in *duobus*—*si* et solum id, quod honestum sit, bonum *iudices* et ab omni animi perturbatione liber *sis*.<sup>3</sup>

Other cases follow:

Cic. *De off.* ii. 12. 43: quamquam praeclare Socrates *hanc viam* ad gloriam proximam . . . . dicebat esse, *si* quis id *ageret*, ut qualis haberi vellet, talis esset.

Cic. *Ad fam.* vii. 10. 4: sic enim tibi persuadeas velim, *unum* mihi esse *solacium*, quare facilius possim pati te esse sine nobis, *si* tibi esse id emolumento *sciam*.

<sup>1</sup>Cic. *P. Sest.* 65. 137 provides a somewhat similar case with an infinitive: *haec est una via . . . . et laudis . . . . et honoris*, a bonis viris . . . . *laudari* et *diligi*, etc.

<sup>2</sup>In this sentence the co-ordination of the noun *hereditate* with the two *si*-clauses is additional evidence of the substantival character of the latter; however, the reading is not absolutely certain. The very loose structure of Plaut. *Bacch.* 953-55 leaves it somewhat uncertain whether or not the *si*-clause is substantive, but the case is worth quoting at any rate as an example of remarkable variety of expression:

Illo *tria* fuisse audivi *fata*, quae illi forent exitio:  
Signum ex arce *si perisset*: alterum etiamst *Troili mors*:  
Tertium, *quom* portae Phrygiae limen superum *scinderetur*.

<sup>3</sup>Other cases with such numerals are Cic. *De orat.* iii. 43. 170 (*tribus* ex rebus), *De fin.* ii. 5. 15 (*duobus* modis), *De off.* ii. 9. 31 (ex *tribus* his), *Lael.* 17. 64 (*haec* duo).

Cic. *Tusc. disp.* i. 46. 111: *illa suspicio* intolerabili dolore cruciat, *si opinamur* eos, quibus orbatum sumus, esse cum aliquo sensu in iis malis, quibus volgo opinantur.

Cic. *Post red. in sen.* 4. 8; P. Lentulus . . . . *hoc lumen consulatus* sui fore putavit, *si me . . . . rei publicae reddidisset.*

Cic. *Acad.* ii. 45. 138: testatur . . . . qui summum bonum dicant *id* esse, *si vacemus* omni molestia, eos invidiosum nomen voluptatis fugere, sed . . . .<sup>1</sup>

The recognition of this substantive use of the *si*-clause throws light here and there upon passages that otherwise cause perplexity and confusion; e. g.:

Tac. *Annal.* i. 11: at patres, quibus *unus metus*, *si intellegere viderentur*, in questus lacrimas vota effundi.

Tacitus is here describing the farce enacted between Tiberius and the senate—he professing not to desire imperial power, they urging it upon him. Tacitus means to say that the senators hesitated at no act of servility, their one dread (*unus metus*) being the betrayal of their comprehension of the true inwardness of the situation (*si intellegere viderentur*); i. e., the *si*-clause is used substantively as an expansion and explanation of *unus metus*. Furneaux, however, in his note on this passage, wanders off after Draeger, finding an analogy for *metus si* in *miror si* and like expressions, and finally elaborates an interpretation which seems to me to miss the very point that Tacitus is trying to bring out, namely, the servility of the senators.<sup>2</sup> A case of this sort is not to be confused with one like the following:

Tac. *Annal.* ii. 42: ille ignarus doli vel, *si intellegere crederetur*, *vim metuens* in urbem properat.

Here the *si*-clause is a normal protasis, the apodosis being bound up in *vim*, i. e., “fearing violence (would befall him), if it were

<sup>1</sup> See also Cic. *In Verr.* II. i. 1. 3 (eo), *P. Planc.* 38. 93 (eo), *Ad fam.* iv. 14. 1 (eo), Tac. *Agr.* 24 (id); Cic. *De invent.* i. 50. 94 (horum), *P. Sex. Rosc.* 17. 49 (hoc), *Acad.* ii. 27. 86 (hoc), *Tusc. disp.* iv. 28. 60 (haec); *De invent.* ii. 7. 24 (illud); *Ad fam.* ii. 4. 2 (una re), *De off.* ii. 8. 27 (hac una re); *De fin.* iv. 12. 28 (uno modo), Plaut. *Ep.* 362 (uno modo), Cic. *Ad Att.* xii. 6. 2 (uno sc. modo), Pliny *Ep.* iv. 13. 7 (uno remedio). The exact sense of the Suetonian passages in which sub condicione appears, is somewhat uncertain (see *Jul.* 68, *Claud.* 24, *Vitell.* 6); a strict grammatical analysis would probably bring the *si*-clauses under this heading. In all the above cases the *si*-clause follows; the reverse order is very rare, e. g., Cic. *De div.* ii. 40. 83 (ea res).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. chap. 7: at Romae ruere in servitutem consules patres eques.

thought that he understood." In the case first cited the *si*-clause sets forth *the thing feared*; here it tells *under what conditions* something was feared. For the sake of further contrast, the following sentence also may be cited in this connection:

Tac. *Annal.* xvi. 5: constitit plerosque equitum . . . obtritōs, et alios . . . morbo exitiabili correptos. quippe *gravior* inerat *metus*, *si* spectaculo *defuissent*.

Here the analysis of the *si*-clause might be doubtful, were it not for the context, which seems to show that an apodosis is to be supplied. The reference is to Nero's literary performances, and the meaning apparently is that the knights risked death by their constant attendance; but they were possessed by a more urgent dread (of the consequences) if they failed to put in an appearance.

A second illustration of the utility of recognizing the substantive use of the *si*-clause is found in the interpretation of

Livy v. 8. 8-9: nec Veientem satis cohibere . . . nec . . . tueri se ab exteriore poterant hoste. *una spes* erat, *si* ex maioribus castris *subveniretur*.

In this sentence Livy manifestly means to say that the one hope (*una spes*) of the Romans was the coming of help from the main camp (*si ex maioribus castris subveniretur*); i. e., the *si*-clause expands and explains *una spes*. But Weissenborn, in his note, says an apodosis is to be supplied—"die Bedingung bezieht sich auf das, was gehofft wird, naml. das Lager zu verteidigen." If *spes* were not modified by *una* this suggestion would work very well—"there was hope (that the position might be held), if help came from the main camp." But *una* is here and must be reckoned with. If the reader can include it, and, at the same time, find an apodosis for the *si*-clause in the words supplied, and yet extract a satisfactory sense from the passage, his success will be greater than mine.<sup>1</sup> But Weissenborn doubtless had no idea

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the conditions are not met by merely supplying such words as W. suggests, i. e., "There was one hope (that their position might be held) if help came from the main camp." For, with this amplification, "hope" may still have the meaning "chance," and "if" be understood in the sense "namely if;" i. e., this amplification does not preclude interpreting the *si*-clause as substantive, and therefore allows a satisfactory meaning for the sentence. It is when the attempt is made to find an *apodosis* for the *si*-clause in the words supplied that difficulty arises.

of setting us such a problem. The fact that his note is headed *spes erat si* (not *una spes erat si*), and that he cites xxxii. 2. 3 as parallel (there *spes* has no modifier), would seem to indicate that he did not notice *una*. Had he done so, probably he would not have written so perverse a note. I add two similar cases in which the *si*-clause is used substantively:

Caes. *B. G.* iii. 5: ad Galbam adcurrunt atque *unam* esse *spem* salutis docent, *si* eruptione facta extremum auxilium *experirentur*.

Livy i. 31. 7: vulgo iam homines eum statum rerum, qui sub Numa rege fuerat requirentes, *unam opem* aegris corporibus relictam, *si* pax veniaque ab diis *impetrata esset*, credebant.

The substantive *si*-clause is of course much rarer than the corresponding *ut*- or *quod*-clause, but the value of its recognition in the matter of interpretation entitles it to far more consideration than it has yet received.

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